Private tutoring the school performance of senior students education essay

Private tutoring has long been a major phenomenon in parts of Asia, including Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan.

In this study, we attempt to highlight the relationship between private tutoring and students' school performance in Hong Kong. It seeks to account the variety of factors of changing students' school performance. The study certainly considers the declining of the confidence of education in current education system as one of the key factors. Meanwhile, the study will examine possible theories to attribute to attend private tutoring and school performance.

Finally, we will discuss the effect of attending private tutoring that cause the students' poor school performance in their school.

In the recent decade, the academia has published a boom of studies on private tutoring in different parts in the world. In the same time, the researches of Bray Mark (2005) reveal that private tutoring is growing elsewhere, especially in the Asian Societies. In countries of Japan, Taiwan and Korean, more than one third students regularly receive private tutoring; in Hong Kong the proportion is considerable higher. As Baker and LeTendre (2005: 55) state, the use of private after-school activities has become " a world megatrend" among families with children apart from the local education system.

Simultaneously, as Baker and LeTendre(2005: 61) state that one of the most certain functions of private tutoring is the " enrichment strategy". It means that the demand of the private tutoring is associated to the competition for future educational opportunities and the existence of high-stake

examinations (public examination). For example, there is a close connection between one's educational qualifications and labor market opportunities. However, private tutoring also provides negative effect to the students such as decreased their interest and participation in school classes. Private tutoring is attributed to a lack of interest of the students. They have kept in mind that they can pay for someone who helps them pass in the examinations and they don't need to pay attention in regularly school lessons.

Private tutoring create new educational opportunities for many individual but also placed heavy burden on the states education system (Silova et al., 2006b).

In HK, according to the Professor Mark Bray's research, there are about 70% senior forms students attending private tutoring. The proportions are higher especially just before important examinations. Meanwhile, according to Census and Statistics Department in 2005, from primary to secondary schools, the total annual expenditure of the tuition fee has reached 3 billion HK dollars.

Although there are no lack of researches studying the tutoring culture in HK, still most of them are mainly focus on studying what motivates students attending tutoring or the relationship between private tutoring and academic achievement.

Whether the out of school tutoring would affect the in-school education, yet it is remains invisible in most researches or debates, let alone policy documents.

2. Objective

With a specific focus on the phenomenon, the study examines private tutoring phenomenon in Hong Kong and analyses its consequences for the students' school performance in the secondary school. We aim to generate pervious studies and develop another aspect of this topic, to have a more specific research towards this topic. Hence, more specifically, our objectives are:

To further understand the contemporary situation of private tutoring

To examine the main factors leading to the change of school performance;

(such as students' expectation of tutors, confidence in current education system to help students to gain qualification)

To test possible theories linking the relationship between private tutoring and school performance

To examine how attending cram schools can affect the performance on mainstream schooling

3. Significance

Explicit significance:

The mainstream education system is expected to achieve a wide range of goals. It includes the development of all-rounded students who have sport and musical talent as well as academic interests or personal development. However, the standardize curriculum emphasized by private tutoring contrasts with that in mainstream schools. Examination-oriented tutoring

institutes cut off the notion of the mainstream education and infuse the focus of passing examination into students mind. We view this phenomenon as negatively distorting the development of mainstream curriculum. Private tutoring can distort the curriculum in the mainstream system, upsetting the sequence of learning planned by mainstream teachers and exacerbating diversity in classrooms.

(Bray, 2007)

Indeed, the over emphasize the importance of private tutoring becomes the barrier over the development of all-rounded students.

In fact, the phenomenon may be an expression of the students over the current education system. The increasing in public demand of private tutoring reflects the existing fundamental problem of current education system, especially the examination institution. Hence, it is the time now for HKSAR government and educationists to review on the current education curriculum.

Implicit significance:

This research is mainly based on the Bray's observation. In his previous study, he mentioned that students attending private tutoring potentially lead to the poor school performance (Bray, 2007). But in the study, he did not concretely point out the theories or concepts to explain the attribution among attending private tutoring and poor school performance. Hence, our research indicates two relative theories to explain the mutual relationship which is called achievement goal theory and cultural of dependence.

The notion of two theories and the attribution among attending private tutoring and poor school performance will be described in detail of the latter part literature review.

Therefore, our research broadens the existing context of the theoretical framework in the study of private tutoring.

We hope to have implications for understanding the contemporary students' expectation towards the tutoring and what is more important is that we hope our research can find something useful for the contemporary educational organizations to enable students to obtain an all-round development and acquire life-long learning skills.

Literature Review

As forming a deductive research, we are going to apply two theories to test our hypothesis, which are achievement goal theory (Ames, 1992) and culture of dependence (Yasmeen, 1992)

-
Achievement goal theory (Ames, 1992)

Achievement goal theory is the label used in educational psychology to discuss research into motivation to learn. Goals of learning are thought to be a key factor influencing the level of a student's intrinsic motivation.

According to this theory, it integrates cognitive and affective components of goal-directed behaviors. Since achievement goal theory argues the purposes of achievement behavior, it mainly studies an ' the integrated pattern of

beliefs, attributions, and affects that produces the intentions of behavior and that it is represented by different ways of approaching, engaging in, and responding to achievement-type activities' (Ames, 1992: 261).

Under achievement goal theory, Ames (1992) suggests performance goal which focuses on students' ability and sense of self-worth. The ability is built up by doing better than others, by surpassing normative-based standards such as examination. More importantly, students want to achieve their goal with little effort. Therefore, students believe learning is an only way to achieve a desired goal and attention is directed toward achieving normatively defined success (Ames, 1992).

Base on this theory, we can understand that why students taking tutoring is so popular in following literature review.

Senior secondary students attend to mass private tutoring

The demand of receiving tutoring is high in senior students (form 4 to form 7) (Lee, 1996). It is because they are presumably sitting two open examinations, which are Hong Kong Advance Level Examination and Hong Kong Certification of Examination. The main reasons for Hong Kong students having tuition are that " they are not satisfied with their academic performance". Also, some of the students say they " that do not understand what their teachers teach in class" (Lee, 1996: 8). Furthermore, there were 8% of respondents admitted preparing for the public examinations is a reason to have tuition (Lee, 1996: 8). In short, as mainstream schools cannot help students to improve their results to take in public examinations, senior students take in tutoring.

Students gain from tutoring for taking in public examination

The majority of students believe that the quality of tuition class is better than schools (Nanayakkara and Ranaweer, 1994). The reason is that students believe tutoring is a short cut to prepare for public examinations. Kwok (2009) mentions that in Hong Kong, tutors usually deliver exam skills and tips, so tutees do not expend full effort in learning individual subject and feel potential loss if they do not receive tutoring. Also, they, usually represent an authoritative teaching image because of their dress code. In other to meet tutees' individual need, tutors introduce CDs and lots of supplementary resources to their tutees.

Furthermore, in students' view, idol tutors are regarded as famous teachers because they can inspire tutees to study efficiently (Kwok, 2009). For example, idol tutors persuade their tutees to select certain areas for revision. Some past public examination questions were covered in idol tutor's lecture notes. All these cause students to rely on tutors rather than school teachers (Kwok, 2009).

Culture of dependence (Yasmeen, 1992)

Yasmeen (1992) argues that lots of students tend to rely on tutoring because of its exam tips. However, classroom attention tends to reduce creation discipline problems for school teachers. In short, students regard only receiving supplementary tutoring is more important than learning with tutoring and mainstream school.

Base on the culture of dependence, there is related information that is found from literature.

Dependency on school teaching for examination

Most students believe the result of public examinations is vital. Kwak (2004) points out that since university admission is determined by public examinations, but not student's school records, students seek to prepare efficiently to take the examinations. In mainstream education, however, schooling not only focuses on examination achievement but also all-rounded education (Bray, 2007). In contrast, the content of tutorial classes is close to the major public examinations (Bray and Kwok, 2003). Hence, students ' tend to undermine the public's trust in school instruction' (Kwak, 2004: 4).

School performance

Bray (2007) argues that tutoring will cause negative impacts on school performance. As some students rely on private tutoring too much, they may be less interested in mainstream education. Also, Students believe that private tutoring can inform student how to pass their examinations; they do not need to attend school classes except when they are required to do so by school regulations (Hussein, 1987). In Japan, some students are absent in school before examination. They just study at homes and attend in tutoring classes (Sawada and Kobayashi, 1986). Since topics have been covered in tutoring classes; students do not pay attention in mainstream education and have less confidence in teachers' teaching (Nanayakkara and Ranaweer, 1994).

There are also other factors affecting students' performance in school like social network. Friendship in school is one of the factors to determinate students' performance (Yang & Tang, 2003). Since friends have same background like school environment (Fehr, 1996), students are more likely to access resources that may be good for coping with academic stresses (Ibarra, 1995). So, friendship network can let students confirm their academic performance (Baldwin, Bedell, Johnson, 1997). More importantly, ' a student who is central in a friendship network has a grater chance of helping others and being helped: thus, he is likely to perform better in the school' (Yang & Tang, 2003: 96).

Furthermore, advice network in school can help students perform well in school. Advice network means that individuals share information and guidance for the completion of work (Sparrowe, Liden, Kraimer, 2001). When a student finishes his task, he can increase his work by obtaining help from available advice network. It reflects an individual is capable of accumulation knowledge and experience about task-related problem. If a student is central in his advice network, he is likely to perform actively in the school (Yang & Tang, 2003).

Conceptual Framework

After reviewing the literatures, we form the following conceptual framework.

Hypothesis

These are our hypotheses of the study as follow:

If students' participation in tutoring is high, then students would have more gain from tutoring.

According to achievement goal theory (Ames, 1992), one of the reasons motivate students taking tutoring is that they seek to success in examination with playing little effort. Therefore, we believe that students can receive lots of useful materials and information from tutors like examination tips supplementary exercise when participating in tutorial lesson for a long time.

Higher students' gain from tutoring, less dependency on school teaching for examination.

According to culture of dependence, students will more rely on tuition than school for their study. So, we want to test whether the tuition for students are important and studying in mainstream schools can fulfill students' satisfactions of taking examination efficiency.

The less dependency on school teaching, the more difficulty concentration on study in school.

The less dependency on school teaching, the less interest in school.

The less dependency on school teaching, the lower attendance in school.

After reviewing the literature, usually there are negative impacts on school performances that are mentioned after students receive tutoring. These hypotheses try to link up the former variables in our conceptual framework and studies whether there is a relationship between the three variables and the poor school performance.

Conceptualization

In this part, there are some definitions of the key concept that help us to clarify the nature and direction of the study.

1.) Definition of Private Tutoring

According to the Mark Bray's book which called " the shadow education system: private tutoring and its implication for planners", the definition of private tutoring can be divided into four dimension.

Firstly, it is the dimension of " privateness". Private tutoring primarily concerned with tutoring provided for profit-making purposes by the private enterprises and individuals. It is not concerned with the supplementary help at public expense, such as provide head-start programmes for slow learners and the unpaid work, such as voluntarily help others with homework and tasks.

Secondly, it is the dimension of the subjects which private schools provide. Private tutoring mainly focuses on the academic subjects, such as English, Cantonese or Mathematics rather than some extra-curricular subjects, such as musical or artistic skills. On the one hand, teaching academic subjects help students relieve the heavy academic load of formal classroom and solve the pressure of facing public examination. On the other hand, those non-academic subjects are merely for personal interest and indirectly related to the formal education system.

Thirdly, the form of the private tutoring deserves special attention. The form of private tutoring may be provided in different ways. Some tutoring is

provided one-to-one in the home of either the tutor or their client. Other tutoring is provided by correspondence in the mail or over the internet.

But in our research, we mainly concentrate in the area of mass private tutoring, such as the tutoring provided by Modern Education and King's Glory Education in Hong Kong.

The form of mass private tutoring is there no more than 45 tutees in each tutoring class and the tutoring run both regular class (live) and video class. Meanwhile, the tutoring classes mainly focus on public examinations with intensive notes, revision exercises and on-line follow up services (Kwok, 2009).

Finally, it is related to the education level of the target students.

Private tutoring exists at the post-secondary and even pre-primary levels. In the majority societies including Hong Kong, private tutoring is most evident at the senior secondary level rather than the junior secondary and upper primary levels.

Hence, the senior students in the secondary school can be reflected the phenomenon of private tutoring. At the meanwhile, senior secondary students more tend to perceive private tutoring as the gateway to success in public examination. Our research is mainly focused on senior secondary school students which mean form 4 to form 7 students.

2.) Gain from tutoring

According to the study of Yiu (1996), he mentioned that the reasons why students attend the private and what their gain in the tutoring class.

First of all, since the EMI schools used English to teach the subjects, students may be benefited from hearing the content again in Chinese. Private tutoring used Chinese as the medium of instruction certain increases students' understanding of the topic and enhances their interest in learning.

Secondly, tutors provide some extra notes and exam skills for the students which school teachers do not provide.

Thirdly, tutors could help consolidate the content which school teacher teach in the class. Therefore, students have a deep understanding of school curricular.

Finally, the extra teaching materials of the tutors provide extra-curricula knowledge to the students which they can not learn in class room.

3.) School teaching for examination

To conceptualize the school teaching for examination, we will defend it is the materials that provide to students for preparation of examination. So, exercise, text book, skills for taking examination, quiz and mock examination which are provided by school will be considered school teaching to help students prepare for examination. It is because these materials can let students conform their knowledge and practice more in order to prepare them efficiency in taking examination.

4.) Definition of School Performance

According to the definition of Indicator and Professional Developing Department (2007), the school performance can be divided into four main dimensions as following:

attitudes and emotions (Personal)

academic results (Academic)

participations in groups (Social)

performance in co-curricular activities (Social)

At the meanwhile, the concrete meaning of poor school performance is the students who have:

(i) difficulty concentrating on study

(ii) decreased academic achievement levels

(iii) decreased interest in school

(iv) increased absences

(v) not participate in class or co-curricular activities actively

(vi) not willing to participate in groups

But in our research, we do not measure academic results as an indicator of one's school performance. It's because the measurement of academic results need to

take a long period time to collect the examination results from the students. Currently, students will get their results in Jane to July, and hence we do not have adequate time to finish our research before April.

Measurement

We choose the 4 level of measurement to form operation and assigns numerical values to the variables. Here are some examples in each variable:

Students attending Tutoring

Nominalʃ classified into 2 or more categories

E. g. Attending private tutoring

1) yes 2) no

Gain from the tutoring

Intervalʃ rank objects such that the magnitude of the difference between two objects can be determined

E. g. Satisfactory towards the exam tips provided from tutorial

Totally satisfied, 2. Satisfied, 3. Dissatisfied, 4. Totally dissatisfied)

Besides of the 4 level of measurement, some scales are used to measure subjective feelings of respondents.

Dependence on School Teaching for Examination

We adopt the Semantic Differential Scale, which is constructed by Osgood in 1950s.

It is interested in attitude toward an object but not in each respondent's evaluation.

E. g. Overall the lessons I am taking in school are

Interesting __ __ __ __ __ Boring

Useful __ __ __ __ __ Useless

Easy __ __ __ __ __ Difficult

Poor school performance

We adopt the Likert scale, which is constructed by Rensis Likert in 1930s.

Subjects are asked to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement with a series of statements which are favorable or unfavorable to the construct.

E. g. Student Attitudes towards Main Schooling

Strongly strongly

agree agree disagree disagree

Q. 1 Tutors is superior than teacher ____ ____ ____ ____

Q. 2 absent at school servial times is OK

since I can catch up the lesson by

attending tutorials ____ ____ ____ ____

Research Design

Purpose of Research

The research is an explanatory and descriptive research.

Explanatory:

In the research, we will explain the conceptual framework we construct, as

the conceptual framework constructed by our group, we will explain how we

construct this conceptual framework.

Descriptive:

In the research, we will describe the statistical data we will get in the survey

by questionnaire, in order to generate a finding of the survey.

Nature of Study

Deductive Approach:

Our research will be conducted in deductive approach. After reviewing the

literatures, we find two theories, which are Achievement goal theory and

Culture of dependency, to prove that how students attending tutoring

classes will affect their school

performance.

We will base on these two theories to conduct our research about the relationship between those two variables in Hong Kong, which are students attending tutoring classes and students' school performance.

Quantitative:

In our research, we have quantitative research method to test the hypotheses in the research. Since we have concerned the difficulties of analysing qualitative data, we choose quantitative research method to conduct the research.

We will use survey to obtain the information about how students' school performance be affected after the students (respondents) have attended to tutoring classes. And for the survey, we will make use of questionnaire to conduct the quantitative research. Since we want to have statistical information to explain how students attending tutoring classes will affect their school performance.

Sampling

Sample size:

The research will seek 150 respondents in the research from form 4 to form 7 secondary school students who have attended tutoring classes in Hong Kong.

Non-probability Sampling:

We will select non-probability sampling in the survey, as we do not have the name list of all form 4 to form 7 secondary school students in Hong Kong, we cannot select the probability sampling in the survey. Also, non-probability

sampling is less costly and time-consuming, which are important advantages for us to select non-probability, as we do not have much time and budget to conduct the research.

Purposeful Sampling:

Our group considers that the school performances of the secondary school students from form 4 to form 7 are more influenced by the tutoring classes. Since they have to prepare for the public examination, such as HKCEE and HKALE, they may rely on the tutoring classes which focus on the techniques of examination, and this is just what the students need to prepare for the public examination.

Convenience Sampling:

The research targeted respondents are the form 4 to form 7 secondary school students who have attended tutoring classes. Therefore, our group will precede the survey in Park Lane Plaza in Tuen Mun, the reason for this is we consider that arcade has many tutoring schools inside, such as Beacon college, Kingsglory Education, Modern Education and Everlearning Eduaction. Therefore, we can capture the accurate samples that can match our targeted respondents, in order to enhance the validity of the research.

Ethical Concern

Our group has concerned the ethical concern may induce during the research, as we do not want to harm the respondents after participating in the research. And we have concluded the possible ethical concern in three kinds.

Students may feel bad about participating in the survey. Students may worry if they have answered " poor performance" at school in the questionnaire will result in a negative effect to themselves and even their schools.

Therefore, in the questionnaire, we will not ask students' personal information, and also, we will ensure the information they provide must keep confidential.

Students may worry about the survey that obstructing them from attending tutoring classes promptly. Also, students may think that the survey is time-wasting for them if they think the research will take for a long time.

To deal with this problem, we will conduct the survey after those tutoring classes have finished, then, students may be free to participate in the research. Also, we will tell them the exactly time the survey will take, which is just about 8 – 10 minutes, and then the students may be pleased to participate in the survey, as the survey is not very long.

The students may have doubt about the research and even us. As they may worry if their information answered will be misused.

To deal with, we will inform the respondents who we are and show them our students' identity card. Also, we will tell them what the purpose of the research is and how their information will be used in the research. More importantly, we will tell respondents that the information will keep confidential.

Data Collection Methods

Through this research, we want to find out the relationship between senior students in mainstream schools to attend tutoring class and poor school performance. To know the situation in Hong Kong, we will design a questionnaire and use quantitative interview. It is because data become more convenient to collect and more accurate that avoids subjective perception (Division of Sociology of Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1998).

We know that there are three main methods to conduct the research with questionnaire in quantitative interview. They are face to face mode, telephone mode and postal mode. Although face to face mode is slow and the cost is high, we still applied it because of the call back rate and high veracity.

In the questionaire, we try to narrow down and choose suitable interviewees. Then, we will ask them how often do they attend to tutoring class. Also, we can find what they can gain from tutoring class, dependency on school teaching for examination and school performance after they have attended the tutoring class. We hope through the quantitative interview using questionaire in face to face mode to find out the information that proves our hypothesis between senior students in mainstream schools to attend tutoring class and poor school performance.

Data Analysis

After we have conducted the interview, we will use bivariate analysis to prove the relationship between different items. Bivariate analysis means the

analysis of two variables in the mean time, for the purpose to determine the empirical relationship between them (Babbie, 2004).

Firstly, we have to prove diffetrent items of relationship to form our conceptual framework. We have to prove that if students attending more in tutoring class with spending more, they will expect more from the tutoring classes. Then, if students can gain more in tutoring class, they will depend lower on school teaching meterials for examination. And then, if students depend lower on school teaching meterials, they will gain poor school performance.

Secondly, after we can prove four independentrelationships, we can try to link up them with running SPSS to find out do they connect altogether.

Lastly, if they can be connected, that means our conceptual framework is correct. But, if they cannot be connected, we will find out the reasons and factors that make the relationship unconnected.

Budget

Schedule